



GRAND GUIGNOL: 4

STARMAN

NO. 65
MAY '00

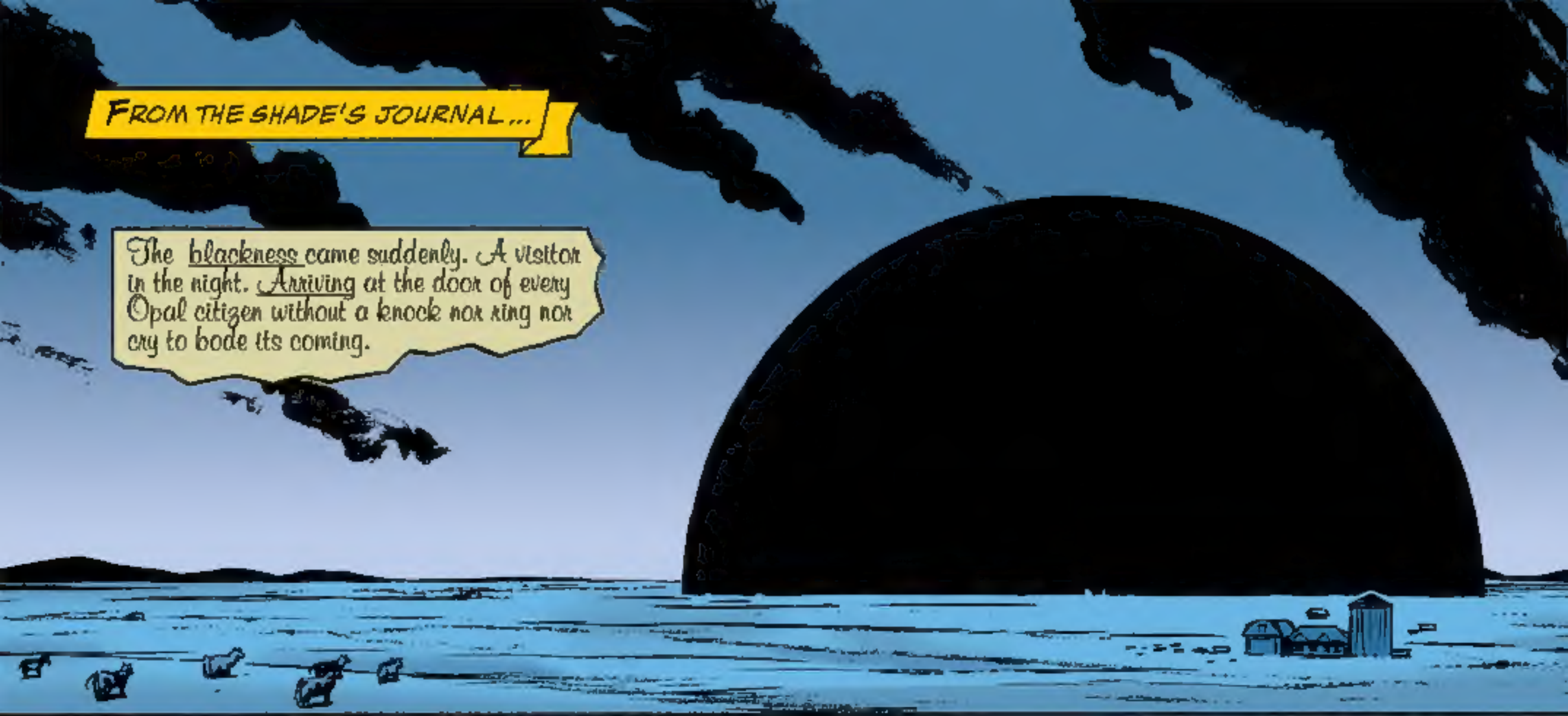


ROBINSON
SNEJBÆRG

ROBINSON
1999

FROM THE SHADE'S JOURNAL ...

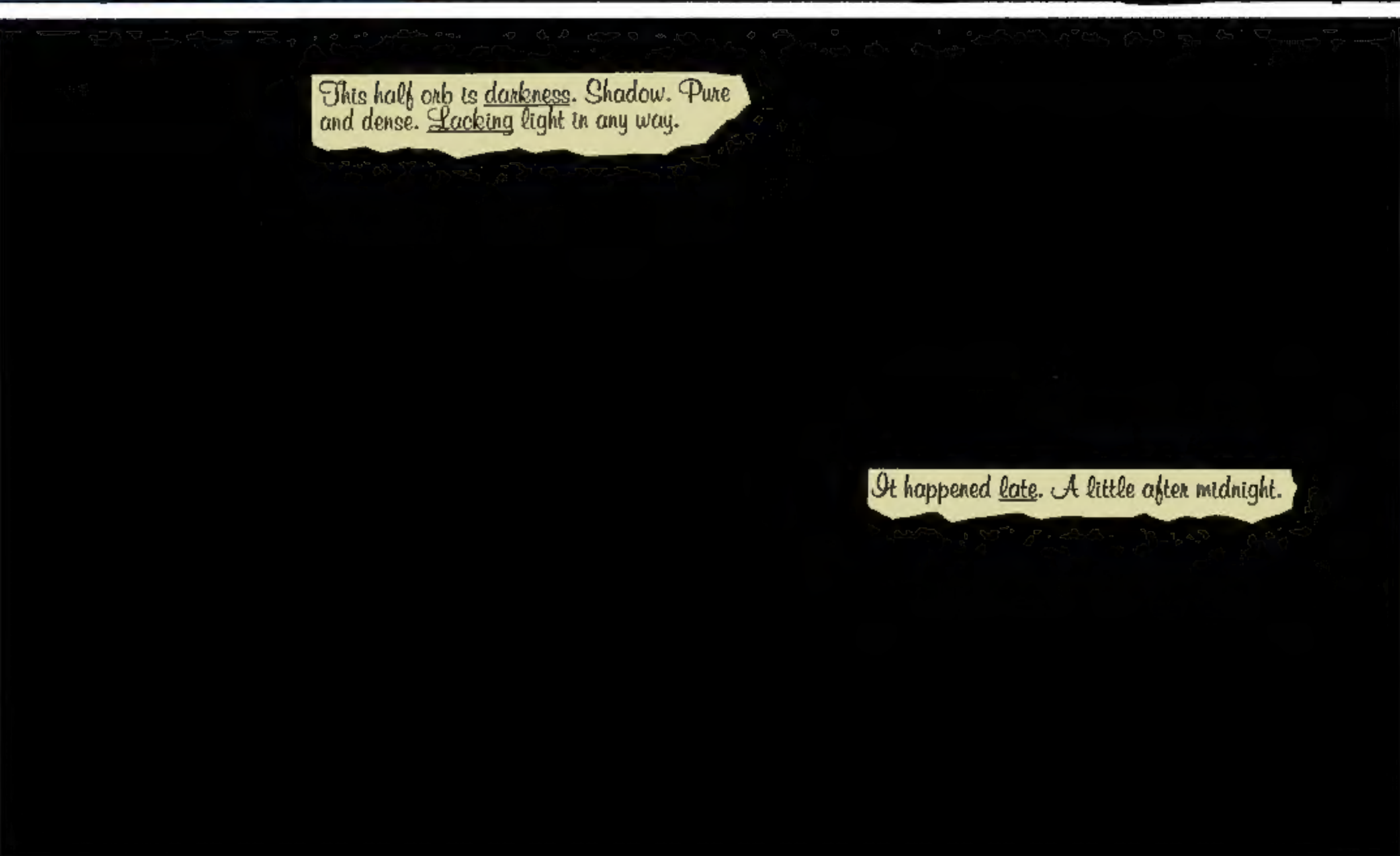
The blackness came suddenly. A visitor in the night. Arriving at the door of every Opal citizen without a knock nor ring nor cry to bode its coming.



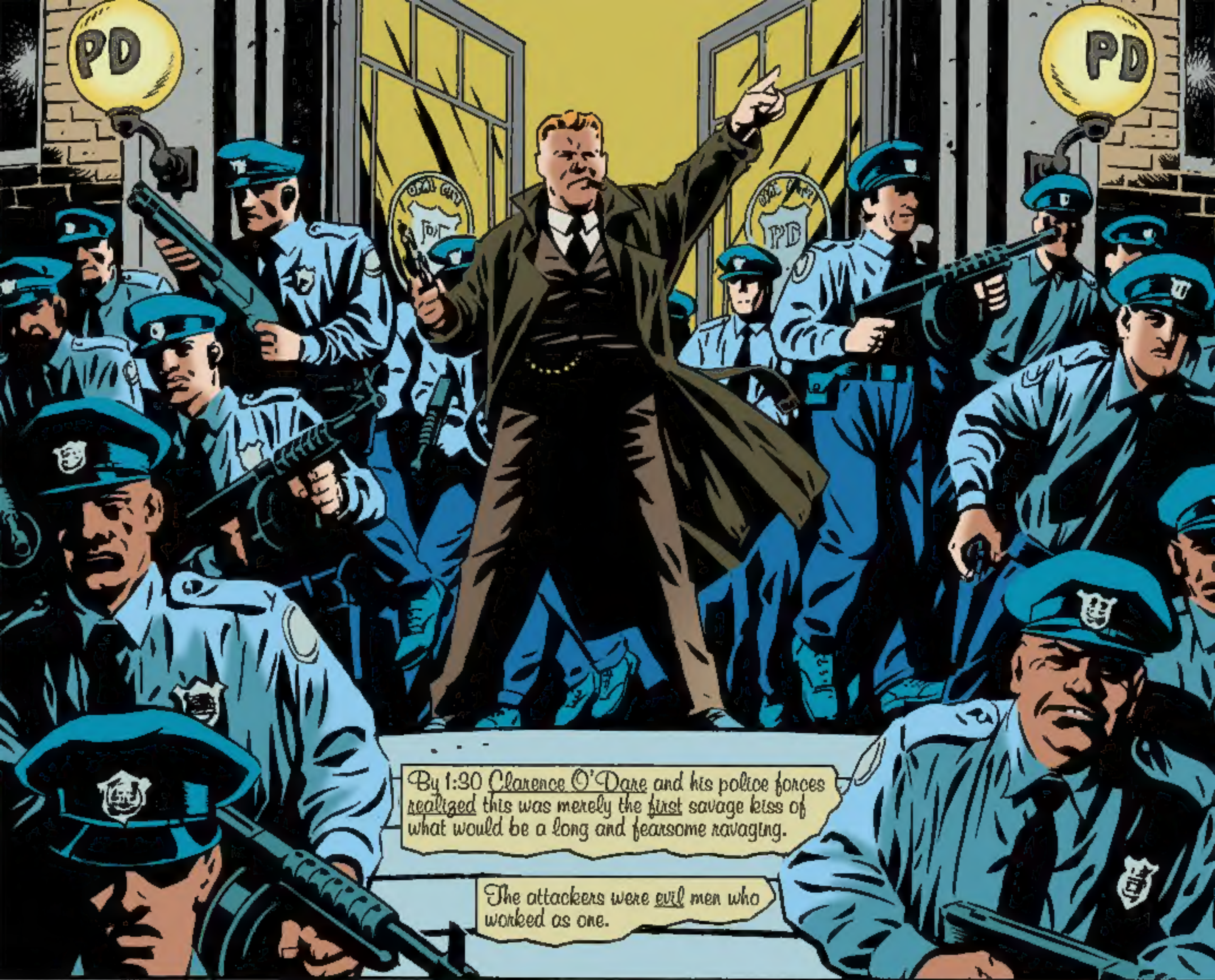
This blackness enveloped the city, covering it in a spherical prison and sealing it off from Turk County and beyond. A black (half) pearl. Beautiful from the outside. Flawless. Although a pearl, if it were real, would shine catching the sun's rays.



This half orb is darkness. Shadow. Pure and dense. Lacking light in any way.



It happened late. A little after midnight.





The attacks were planned with military precision.

Targets pinpointed, attacked...



...And overcome with ruthless (and lethal) accuracy.



This dark army comprised a scattering of names from the Starman's past.



The most notable of these being the Mist...this generation's version of Ted Knight's greatest foe...

...This was his daughter Nash, who in a far from balanced state of mind, hated Ted's son Jack with the passion equal to yore and father hating father.



Solomon Grundy. Now his older, more familiar evil self.



Aaron and Lupe Bodine... Husband and wife thrill-killers who thought themselves the wittiest people in the world.

OPAL K... IC

TURBINE CONTROL 2



There was also Crusher, an odd creature who at one time had worked as the aide to a succubus. (And in doing so had fought both Jack Knight and Mikeal Tomas.)



And there was an archer fighting alongside them, who at least in appearance resembled someone from my own travails. Someone who for those familiar with my past, might find our association baffling.



The foot soldiers themselves comprised criminals from Opal's underworld, as well as many expert specialists from around the world.

All of them had hidden away in the weeks prior to this wicked night.



However, an equal number of "troops" were one further sight remote in time yet not long forgotten -- the Rag Doll Cult -- murderous disciples of the Rag Doll...



...Long thought dead but now apparently resurrected to lead his horde... looking better than he had ever in the time before his "demise."

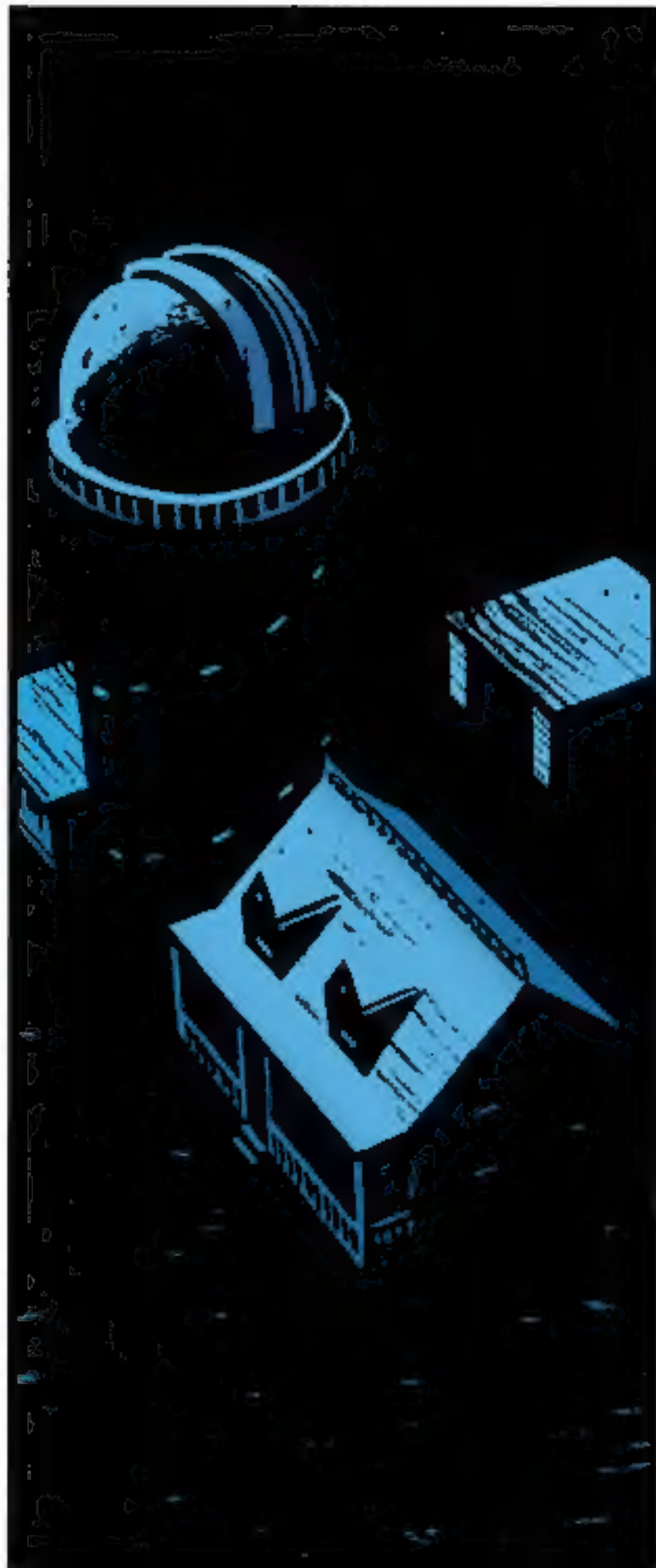


And that was who took Opal.

Oh, and one other. One other. Whose ire was directed towards Ted Knight for a past defeat...









LUCKY
OLD MAN.



The night continued.

There were rumors of heroes...



...Two who remained abroad in Opal...
Starman and the Black Condor...

There was talk of them fighting their own good fights...

... But these were whispers and nothing proven.



No, the only fact was that evil took the city in its furious embrace.

And the darkness that had already enveloped the city then descended upon it.



Blacker even than my coffee...if you can believe such a thing possible.

Now read on...



OH, RALPH,
WHAT'S GOING
ON?



I WISH I
COULD TELL
YOU.

SHOULDN'T
YOU BE OUT
THERE?



KNOCKING
HEADS? MAYBE.
MAYBE I COULD
COME UP WITH
SOME GOOD ONE-
LINERS.

MAYBE I'LL
WASTE *PRECIOUS*
TIME THAT NEITHER
WE NOR OPAL CITY
CAN SPARE.

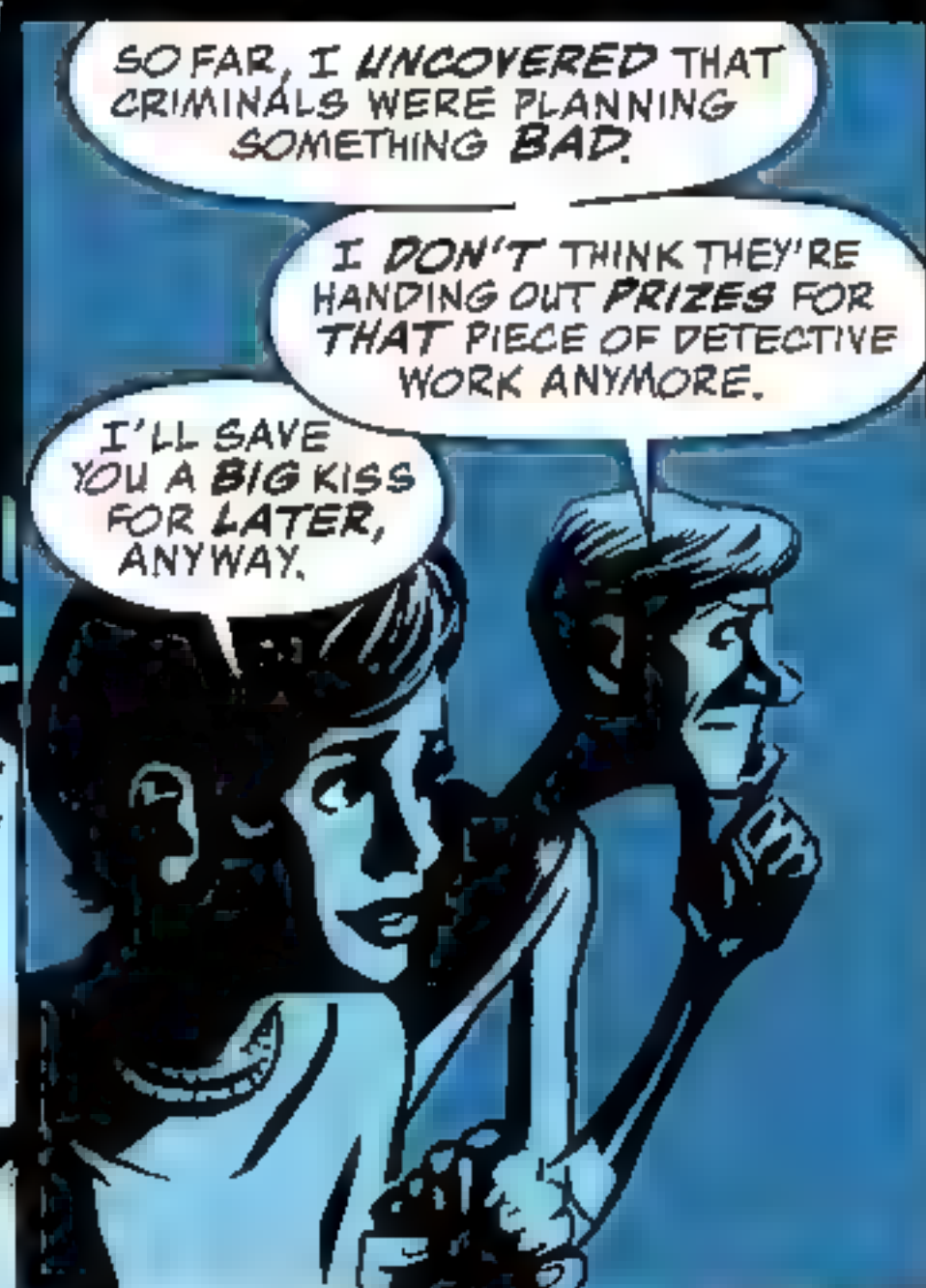


I'M HAPPY
RIDING SHOTGUN
WITH YOU, BABY, BUT
SOME HINTS ON WHERE
THIS STAGECOACH IS
GOING WOULD BE
NICE.

I'M DOING
WHAT I SAID I
WOULD. WHAT I PROM-
ISED JACK KNIGHT AND
THE BLACK CONDOR.

BEING
A STRETCHY
SHERLOCK?

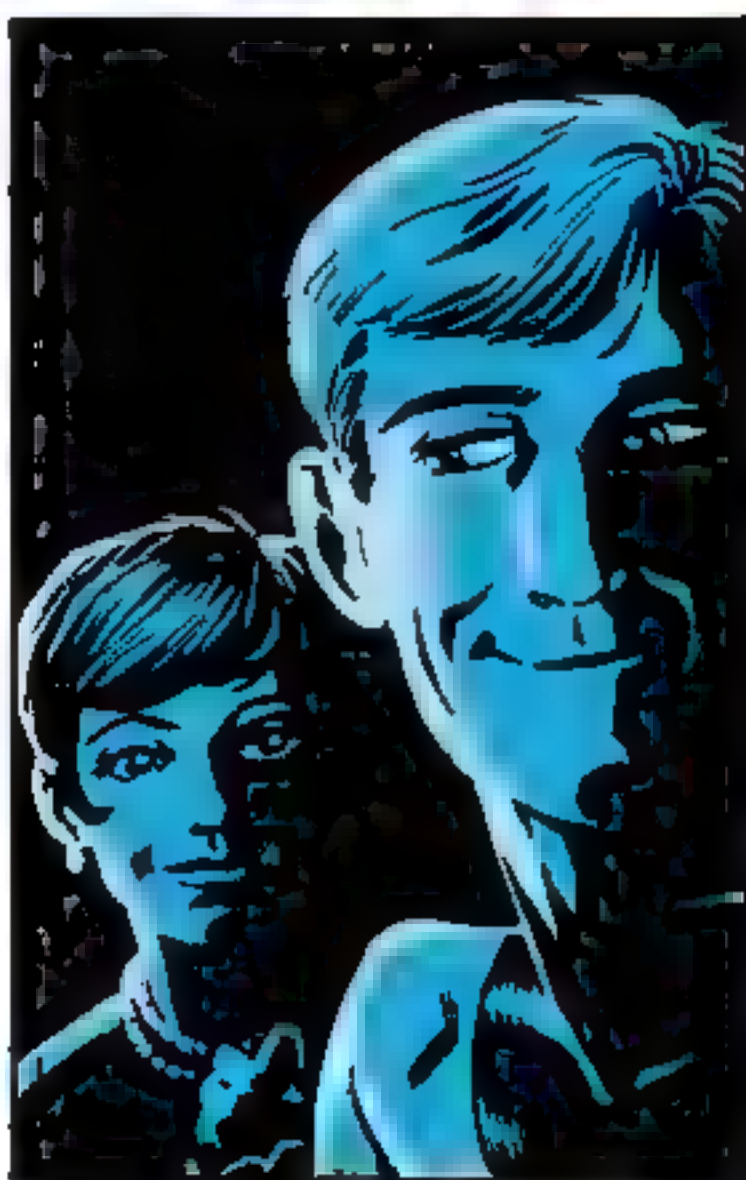
YOU
GOT IT,
BABY.



SO FAR, I UNCOVERED THAT
CRIMINALS WERE PLANNING
SOMETHING BAD.

I DON'T THINK THEY'RE
HANDING OUT PRIZES FOR
THAT PIECE OF DETECTIVE
WORK ANYMORE.

I'LL SAVE
YOU A BIG KISS
FOR LATER,
ANYWAY.



THE
OTHER INFORMATION
I PICKED UP WAS THAT
THE SHADE'S... ASSISTANTS?
... IS THAT THE WORD
FOR THEM?

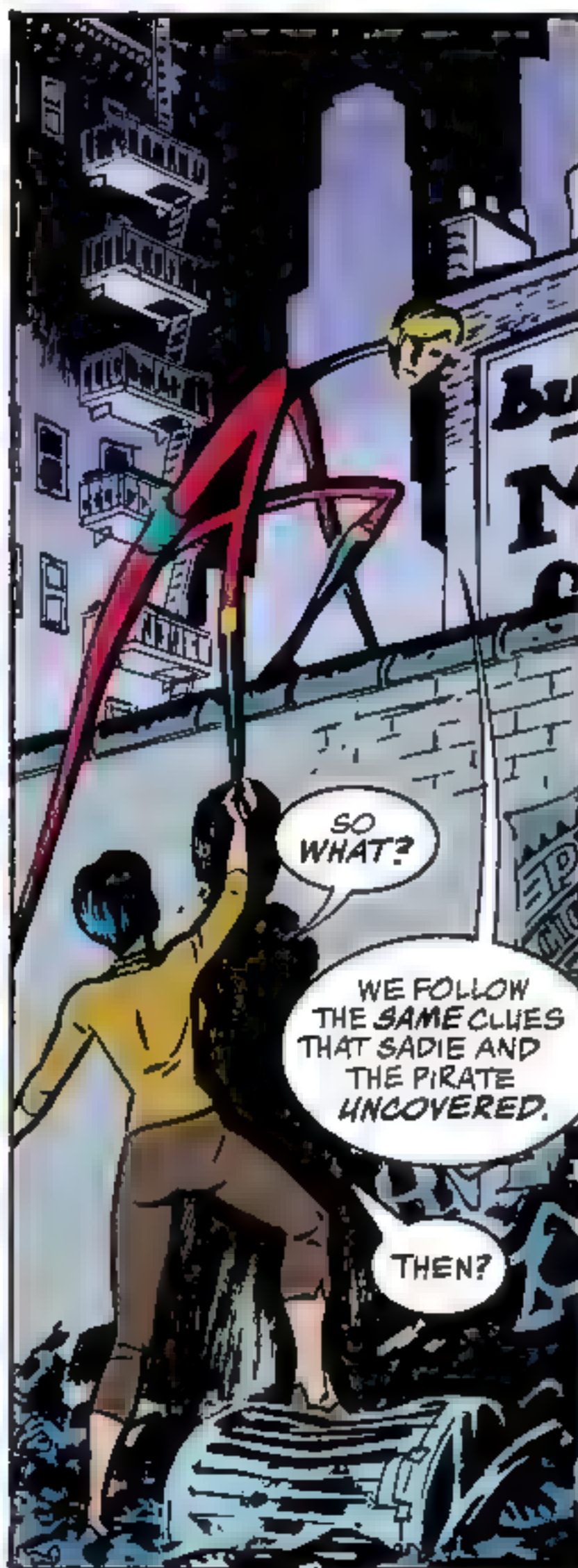
HENCHMEN?

ASSISTANTS...
HENCHMEN... THE
BODINES. PSYCHO
HUSBAND AND
WIFE.



THEY WERE
SEARCHING FOR
SADIE FALK, JACK
KNIGHT'S GIRLIE.
SHE WAS HELPING
A GHOST...

... A PIRATE'S
GHOST... WHO I FEEL
... MY GUT TELLS ME
THAT PIRATE'S GHOST
IS IMPORTANT TO
ALL THIS.



SO
WHAT?

WE FOLLOW
THE SAME CLUES
THAT SADIE AND
THE PIRATE
UNCOVERED.

THEN?



WE TAKE
THAT TRAIL
EVEN
FURTHER.



SUE DIBNY WATCHES
HER HUSBAND.

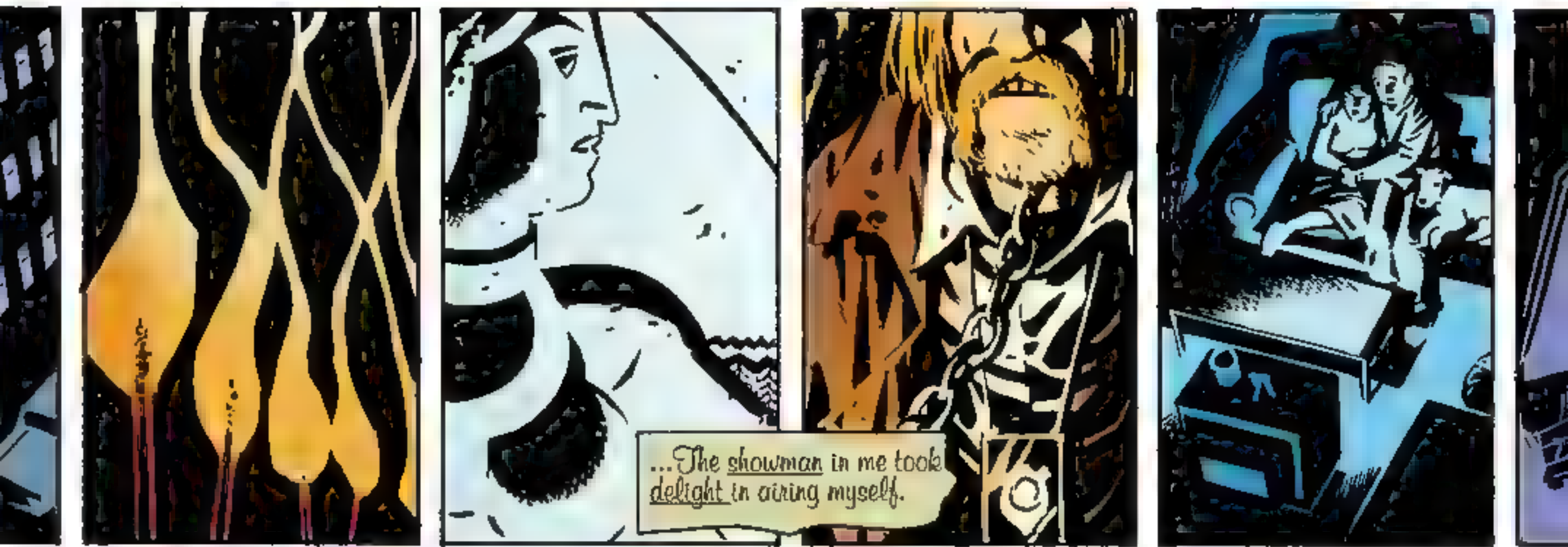
ONE THOUGHT
IN HER HEAD.





PREPARE
FOR LIVE
BROADCAST

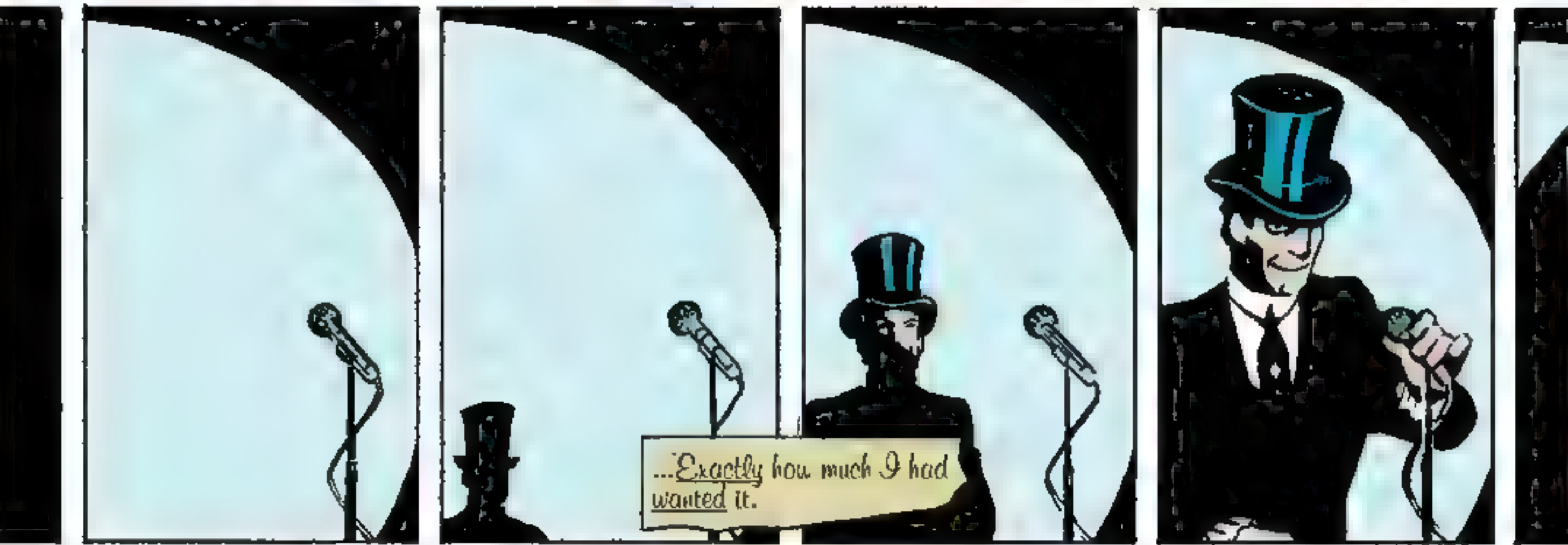
58 minutes after the city
was mine...



...The showman in me took
delight in airing myself.



I wanted Opal to know...



...Exactly how much I had
wanted it.

Grand Guignol • Quatrième Partie

Darkness Not of Night

Robinson • Snejbjerg • Oakley • Wright • Jamison
writer • artist • letterer • colorist • separator
Williams • Tomasi • Goodwin • Jack Knight created
asst. editor editor guiding light by Robinson & Harris



SOME OF YOU GATHERED HERE MIGHT RECOGNIZE ME. THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE EXPLOITS OF SUPERVILLAINS ABROAD, IN CITIES OTHER THAN THIS ONE.

FOR ALTHOUGH I HAVE LIVED HERE FOR MANY YEARS, I MAKE THAT FACT KNOWN TO YOU NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME.

MY NAME IS THE SHADE.

AND AS OF THIS DAY, OPAL CITY IS MINE.

MY CRIMES HAVE BEEN MANY. THE LOCATIONS OF SAME MANY. ALL FAR-FLUNG.

THE BLACK SPHERE THAT ENCASES THE CITY COMPRISES THE SHADOW MATTER THAT I WIELD AS MY POWER OF CHOICE ...THIS TIME MIXED WITH OTHER ARCAINE INGREDIENTS. THE RESULT IS A PRISON THAT NO ONE OUTSIDE OF OPAL CAN PIERCE.

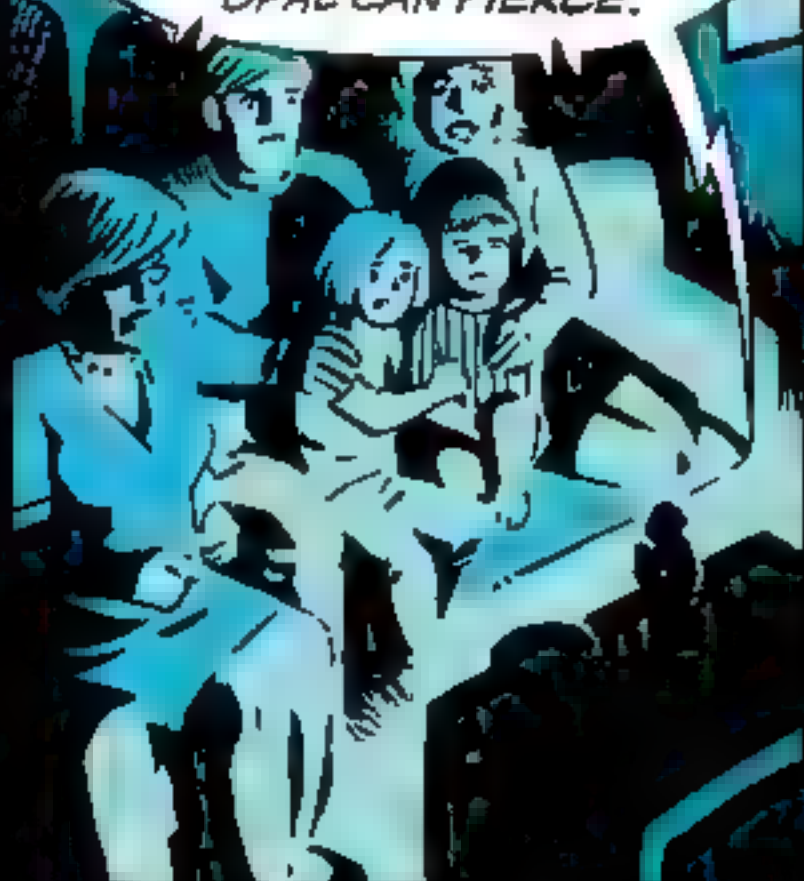
NO HERO. NO MATTER HOW SMALL. THE ATOM CAN GO AS SUB-ATOMIC AS HE LIKES, HE'LL STILL FIND THE SHELL TOO DENSE TO ENTER. IT IS ALSO POWERFUL... ABLE TO RESIST THE MIGHT OF SUPERMAN OR ANY OF THE OTHER MUSCLE LADS WHO PUNCH AND FLEX.

THE ARCAINE ELEMENT TO THE SHELL IS COMPLEX ENOUGH WHEN COMBINED WITH THE SHADOW THAT IT WILL RESIST SPELLS FROM THE LIKES OF DR. FATE OR "LITTLE MISS FISHNETS," WHATEVER HER NAME IS.

THE SHELL, ALTHOUGH YOU WOULDN'T KNOW IT FROM THE EXTERIOR, ALSO ACTUALLY EXTENDS UNDER THE GROUND AND IS, IN REALITY, A FULL SPHERE, HALF OF IT SUBMERGED IN THE EARTH.

SO CAVE CARSON, ANIMAL MAN WITH MOLE POWERS OR WHOEVER ELSE GETS THE NOTION TO GO A-DIGGING CAN PUT HIS BUCKET AND SPADE BACK IN THE GARDENING SHED.

FURTHERMORE, ALL OUTSIDE CONNECTIONS HAVE BEEN SEVERED BY THE SHELL. RADIO WAVES. CELL. CABLE TV. EVEN WATER... IN CASE, GOD FORBID, THERE'S A SUBATOMIC SUBMARINE HERO I'VE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH NEVER TO HEAR OF.



THE CITY IS POWERED SOLELY BY ITS INTERIOR GENERATOR. WHEN THOSE DIE, SO WILL OPAL'S REMAINING LIGHT.

NOT THAT IT WILL MATTER.



BY THEN YOU'LL ALL BE DEAD.



MY ASSAULT ON OPAL WHICH BEGAN WITH THE EXPLOSIONS, FOLLOWED WITH THE ENCASEMENT ORB AND THE OVERPOWERING OF THE CITY'S AUTHORITIES, WILL CONTINUE WITH A RATHER DRAMATIC FINALE.



THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY, EVERY SQUARE FOOT OF IT ALONG WITH ALL OF YOU POOR UNFORTUNATES, BEING CON-SIGNED TO A DIMENSION THAT UNTIL I UNLEASHED IT TO FORM THE ORB, HOUSED MY SHADOW BLACKNESS.



NO. I'M NOT SUICIDAL. I SHALL BE GONE BY THEN. GONE, AND WITH ME, SO WILL THE VAST STOREHOUSE OF WEALTH THAT OPAL CITY HAS.



MY COLLEAGUES, OF COURSE, WILL ACCOMPANY ME.



YOU MAY ASK YOURSELF, WHAT OF THE HEROES YOU PUT SUCH FAITH IN TO GUARD THIS PLACE.

MANY ARE CAPTURED.

AS YOU CAN SEE.

I AM AWARE OF A FEW WHO REMAIN ABROAD STILL. ONLY ONE INTERESTS ME.

THE OBVIOUS ONE.



JACK KNIGHT...
STARMAN. OH,
JACKIE BOY, WHERE
ART THOU?

IT APPEARS
WHEN REAL DANGER
LOOMS, THE CITY'S CHAMPION
HIDES. I CAN'T SAY I BLAME
HIM. PERHAPS I WOULD
DO THE SAME.

LUCKILY, I
HAVE THE MEANS
TO DRAW THIS LITTLE
MOUSE FROM HIS
HOLE.

AND ISN'T
THIS A
BEAUTIFUL
PIECE OF
CHEESE!

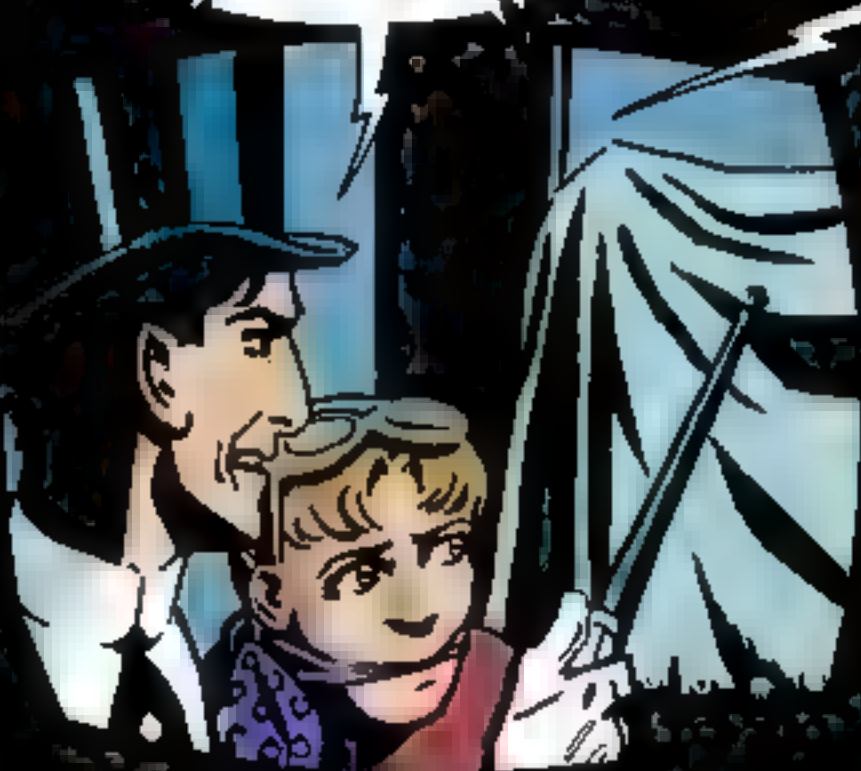


THIS IS JACK
KNIGHT'S LADY FRIEND.
SHE'S QUITE LOVELY.
AND UNLESS JACK
APPEARS IN A TIMELY
MANNER, SHE'LL BE
QUITE DEAD.

PEOPLE WHO KNOW
OF MY CRIMES ABROAD
WILL BE AWARE THAT I
CARE NOT ONE JOT FOR
THE LIVES OF OTHERS.

BUT FOR THOSE
NEW TO ME AND MY
WICKED WAYS, I
PRESENT AN
EXAMPLE.

AND
PROOF THAT,
WITH THE
POSSIBLE
EXCEPTION OF
MYSELF...



... NO ONE
LIVES
FOREVER.

BOBO
BENNETTI WAS
MY FAVORITE
AMONG OPAL'S
SECOND TIER
OF HEROES,
TOO.

IMAGINE
WHAT I'LL DO TO
THIS ONE, JACK.
I DON'T EVEN
LIKE HER.

ENOUGH,
SHADE!







I have written of the rape of Opal... the blasts and the blood ...as if they were my doing.

And indeed they were...in a way.

NO LIGHT!
THE ROD WAS
POWERED BY
STORED
ENERGY!

For it was me in body, if not in mind,
who began this foul drama.

"HE'S POWERLESS!"

But I see now that although I
am guilty of many crimes, of this
I am ultimately blameless.



At the heart of it was
the work of another.



One other.



Him.



Who I have hated...for so
long I have hated that by
now it seems eternal.



My immortal enemy...





Grand Guignol Cinquième Partie

Back to the past of
Culp's history, his prior
encounters with the
Shade, and how this
led to the dark
matters at hand in
A VILLAIN'S TALE



Deadman Wade

"THIS IS WHAT
AWESOME
LOOKS LIKE".

DCP